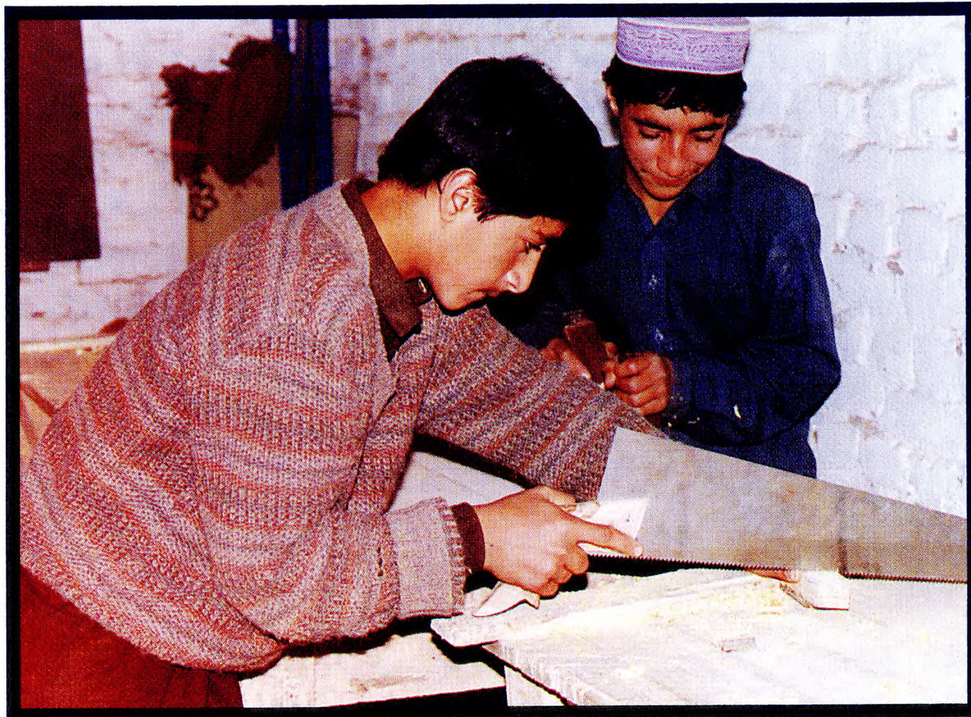
After 500 hours of vocational training course, members of brick kiln community having no previous education, can find work as skilled craftsmen.



Measures taken to Improve the Vocational Course for the Brick Kiln Workers Community.

Tailoring Course

 Previously hired instructors were given a refresher course.

 Sewing machines were purchased to be given at the end of the course to the trainees as incentives.

 Training material was purchased for 61 tailoring trainees.

 Twice weekly supervision and monitoring of the training course was undertaken by a coordinator.

Carpentry Course

 New carpentry equipment and training material for the trainees was purchased.

 The products produced by the trainees were given back to them.

 Monitoring and supervision of the program was made twice weekly by a coordinator.

Thus, GTZ provides a complete package, where a trainee has the opportunity of learning a skill, of gaining practical experience, and then applying it under the supervision of professional staff. Finally for running the business independently the trainees can even apply for a loan scheme arranged by the SES.

In the month of July 1997, 75 graduates from the brick kiln community qualified and were capable of running their own carpentry or training shops, or to get employment as craftsmen. By the end of this year it is expected that further 75 graduates will qualify.

Paradise Environmental and Community Welfare Society, Peshawar.

Paradise NGO was founded in July 1994 with its Head Office based in Peshawar. Registered under the Society Act in Peshawar, NWFP, on July 17th 1994, its target area is Peshawar. Set up mainly for the protection of the environment, its main emphasis is on working for the welfare of low income communities. It enables poor communities to alleviate their poverty, and helps to create the conditions under which poverty may be mitigated in the future. In the field of environment it is not only working to create an awareness regarding sensitive issues related to the environment but is also taking practical steps to improve it.

Core Objectives.

Paradise NGO acts as link between community, government departments and other external donor agencies. Some of its main objectives are

Raising awareness about the environment.

Taking practical steps for the protection of environment.

The improvement of the working and living conditions of low income community (especially their children) of rural / urban areas.

The overall development of female community.

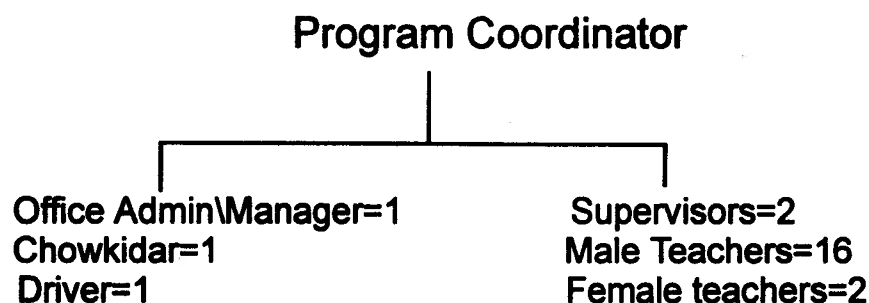
GTZ / Paradise's Basic Education Schooling Project

The schooling project is targeted towards the urban and rural community of Jalala and Peshawar region. The main target group comprises :

Brick kiln workers and their families.

Low income communities.

A 24 member team of Paradise NGO is involved in the implementation of a schooling program:



The aim of the schooling project is to not only give basic education but also skills which they can practically utilize.

Besides giving basic knowledge about other subjects according to the standardized texts, introducing basic hygiene to children is also seen vitol.

In addition to teaching basic skills like embroidery and stitching to women, for men familiarization with ceramics is provided to encourage them to start their own businesses.

Other Completed Activities of GTZ / Paradise.

MPS (Multi-pot Stove) was implemented in Peshawar, Kohat, Swabi and Mardan. The basic aim was to introduce a simple yet effective and affordable technology for saving fuel. Both male and female were included in the target group to spread an effective awareness campaign. In order to ensure its sustainability, a channel for local production and marketing was also arranged.

FECT (Fuel-Saving Efficient Cooking Technology). It is an improved version of traditional bakery oven. With its production centers started in Mardan,Swabi, Kohat, Swat and Peshawar, the purpose of this activity was to replace the traditional oven by a dome-shaped one, to reduce heat loss. 45 ovens were converted, whereas 36 were replaced.

VSBK (Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln). The traditional brick kilns that are a major source of environmental pollution were replaced by VSBK. Introduced by GTZ, it was based on Chinese technology and implemented in Jalala.

Solid Waste Management. For the pilot phase, 'University Town' in the city of Peshawar was selected as the target area. 17 waste bins, a tractor and a trolley were bought to start the project. The waste was collected from the sites and than emptied at the dumping site. The aim was to reduce the pollution in the city.

Skill for Employment and Self-Employment (SES).

By providing vocational training to Pakistani and Afghan men and women, SES aims to strengthen their trainees' own initiative, enabling them to improve their living conditions by employing the skills taught to them. Skill for Employment and Self Employment is an off-shoot of Pak-German Technical Training Program (TTP), which started vocational training courses in 1982, for Afghan refugees. Afghan war refugees have become a significant component of Northwest Frontier Province's population. Around 2.5 million Afghans migrated to NWFP during the period from 1979 to 1992. Local Pakistanis also benefited from this program. In August 1995 in order to implement the SES concept, the Pakistani staff of PGTTP formed this organization.

SES strives to provide vocational training to people to help them to solve their economic problems. It does so by effectively transferring expertise, and on a smaller scale, materials and equipment free of charge. The aim of SES is to provide its trainees, belonging mostly to the lower stratum of society, with independence to start their own trade. Their target group is individuals who generally lack the training, skill, and education to enter occupations that would help them to earn their living. They are relegated to the margins of the economy. Thus, it is seen vital to maximize the potential of this category of individuals.

The SES Vocational Training Program

The short-term program chalked out by the SES includes the following components:

1. Basic Training (Center based \apprenticeship training).
   This component of the training program is a five months course, with a total number of 500 hours of instruction for the tailoring, plumbing, carpentry, and welding skills. This component is highly attractive for a large number of unemployed individuals, having no employment prospects. Most of the trainees, who are usually illiterate and unemployed, at the end of 500 hours of training, manage to find work as unskilled laborers. By the time they have finished this stage of training, they are able to judge what is required of their respective skills in the labor market. Thus, at the completion of this stage of vocational training, the trainees are able to look forward to a future that is not insecure. The apprenticeship training program is an effective component, especially in areas where there are not enough trainees to start a rural center.

   Craftsmen who are good at their job and are willing to

participate, are selected as 'ustaad' (master). The `shaagird' (apprentices) spend as much time as possible in the workshop in order to gain additional experience.

2. Practical training (Supervised workshops and practical training groups).
Here the stress is on the basic\simple workmanship. Orders are received from the customers according to their needs and demands. In this the SES acts as a contractor for the customers. For the trainees the basic aim is to acquire practical experience. While being trained they are taught to address the needs of rural areas.

3. Supervised Workshops.
This component is a step towards self employment or creating small business. After working for five months here the trainees learn business skills and improve on practical skills.

4 Loan scheme.
This is a special scheme that enables the trainees, who are mostly from the low income group, for obtaining loans. This is to encourage them to practice the skills they have acquired.

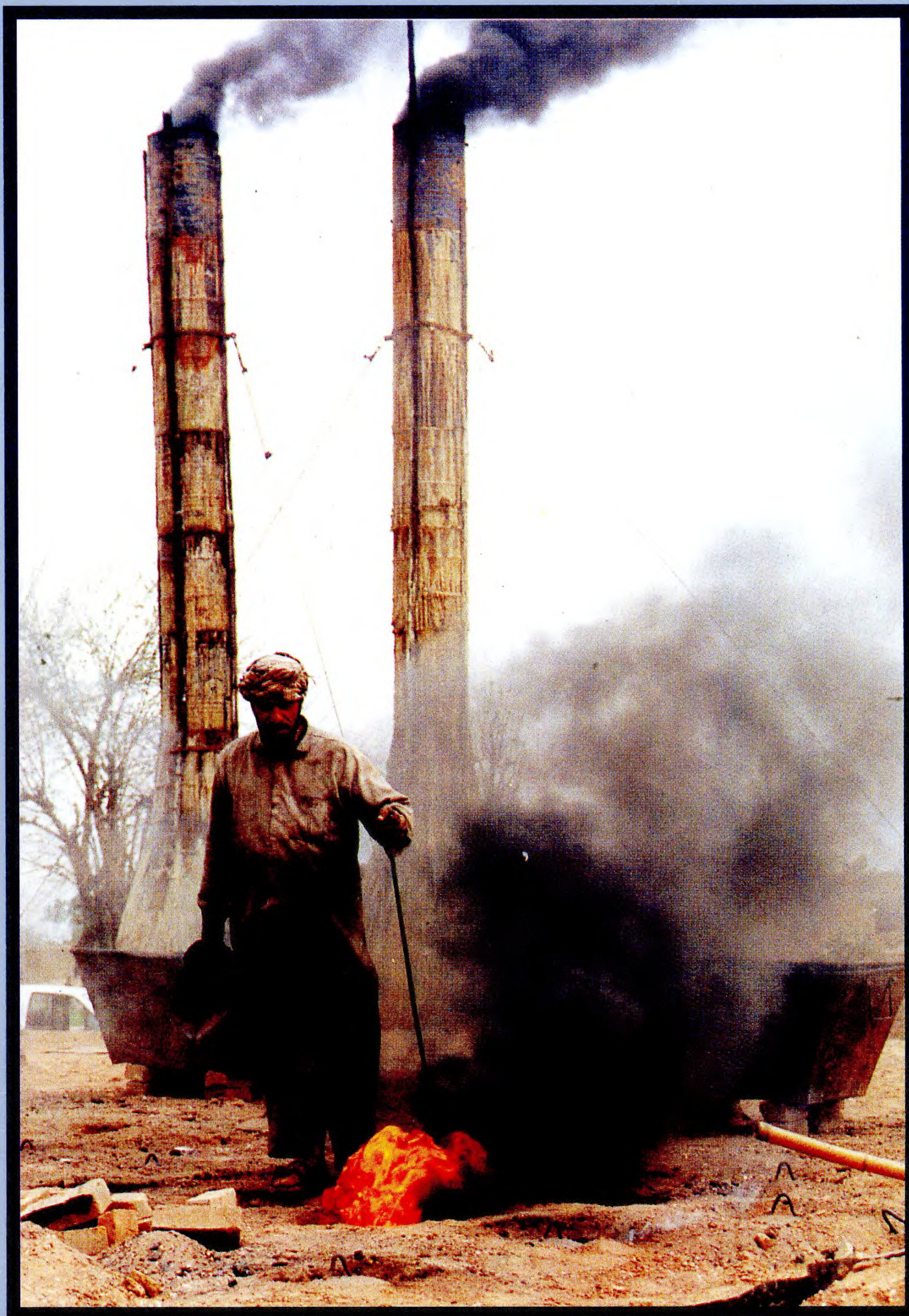
A tailoring course is offered for women. This particular course is attractive for women because of its compliance with the strict rules of 'purdah'. The workshops where women can continue polishing their skills, accept orders, and also provide income for the women working there.

The trainees have to go through a gradual step-by-step training and guidance in order to prepare them for self-employment or the labor market. In conditions where the majority of population depends on the informal sector for their subsistence, the project proves highly effective as it pays more attention to the development potential of the informal sector.

The major aim of SES is to make a commitment to creating sustainable change in the living conditions of its trainees. To ensure that the trainees are not made dependent on SES, the program emphasizes more on providing them assistance to enable them to become independent.

PART TWO

Journey through photos

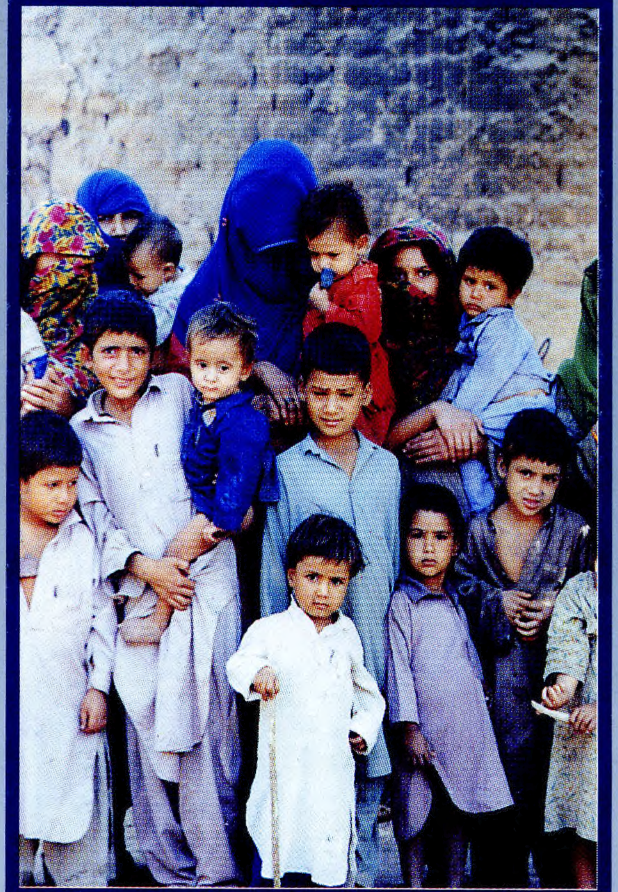


If I fail to work, I lose money.
Mostly my family has to eat dry 'roti' (bread).
Once in a while they have 'shorba' (gravy) with it.
Sometimes we sleep
with full stomachs, but not often', says a brick kiln worker.

A past that was uncertain.



"I have no other choice. With no skill or education, how can I break free from these working conditions?", says a brick kiln worker.



Home is central to family life, whatever form it might take. Members of a brick kiln worker's family, living under one mud roof and struggling together for day to day survival.

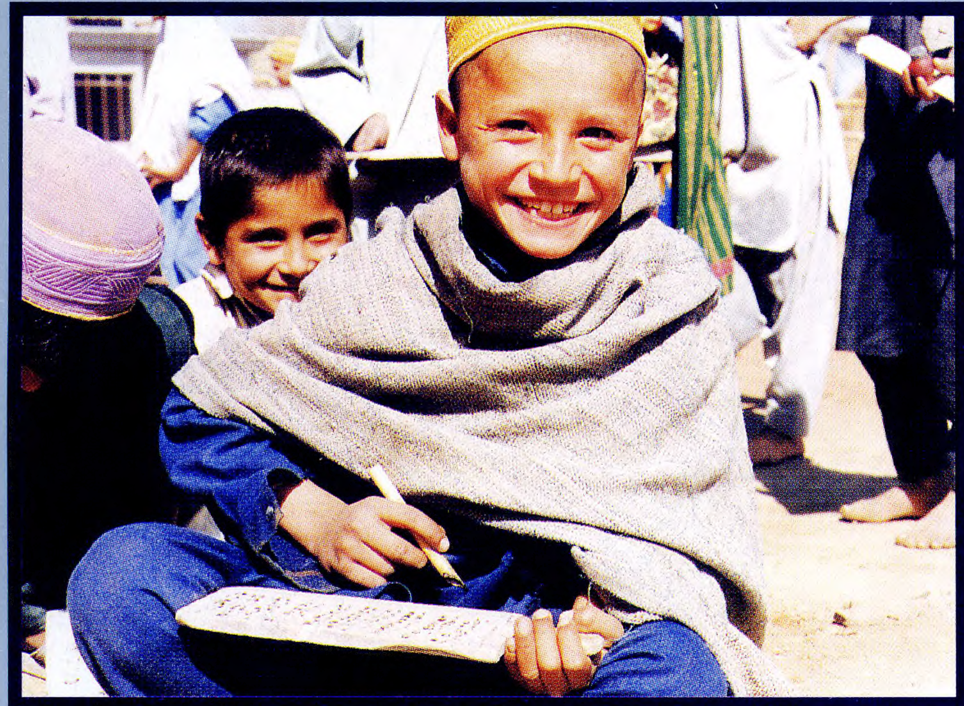


Old before their time; Brick kiln workers' children show loyalty to their family by contributing to the family income, only reaping meager results.



Without basic education, the brick kiln workers' children face prospects as bleak as their surroundings.

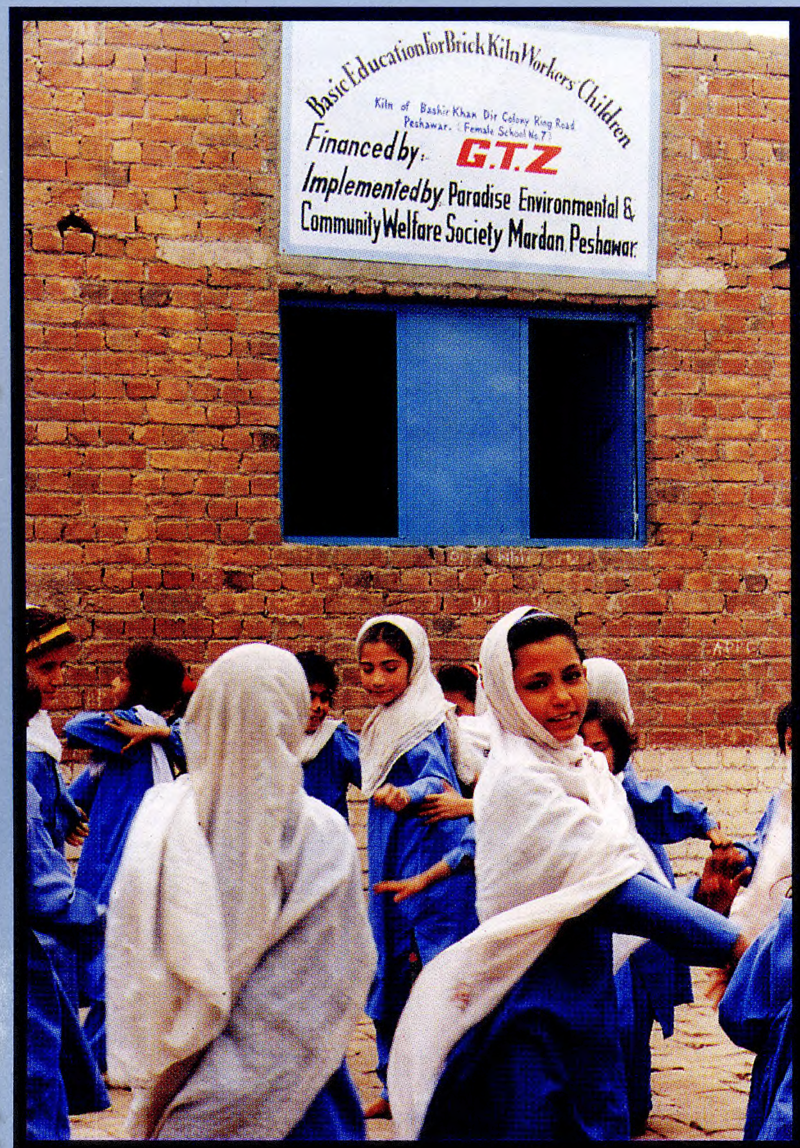
A present that is hopeful



Poverty lingers on, education is what survives.
Happy faces at a GTZ school.



The children wish that the ray of hope does not weaken

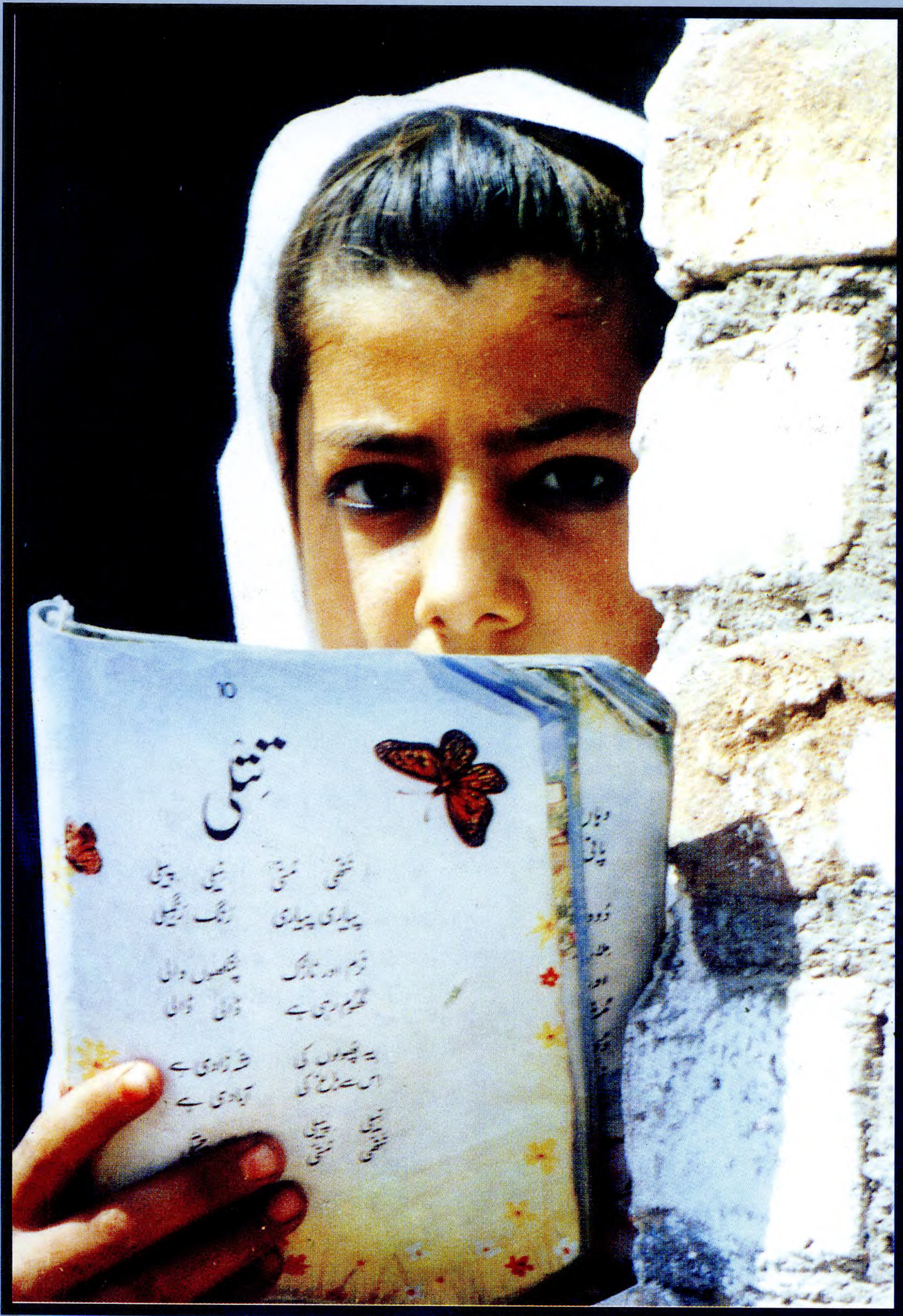


***"I enjoy being at school. Besides the lessons, that is the only place where I get to play with my friends. It is a place where I have no household chores to do or bricks to mold"*, says a girl student.**



The trainees are trained and guided into self-employment. GTZ offers them prospects for a better future.

A future that is unknown



***"The butterfly flutters from one branch to another"*, says Sharifa's book. Drifting away from education is not what she wants.**



PART THREE

From an abyss towards light.

(Stories of Sharifa and Khushaal)

Future Plan

The proposed plan is to equip the brick kiln workers community with enough professionals so that they can take over these centers and continue running them with the help of NGO's and CBO's (Community Based Organizations). For this purpose a committee consisting of representatives of the community , NGOs and CBOs is proposed to be instituted and would start to function by the end of November 1997.

It is envisaged and also planned that the educational program should become self sustainable by the end of 1997. The Parents Committee, the Brick Kiln Owners and the Paradise Welfare Society , Peshawar\Mardan would continue this program without the assistance of any foreign donor. The parents have already agreed to contribute towards the monthly salaries of the school teachers. It has been planned that brick kiln workers would finance 20% of the required expenses (mainly teachers salaries) for the five vocational training centers and 80% would be covered by the NGO's and CBO's .

Conclusion

GTZ's modest participation in the welfare of brick kiln workers children has already started to bear fruit. The overwhelming enthusiasm of the children and adults to attend school and vocational training, the whole hearted support of parents and brick kiln owners is ample manifestation of a hope for a better future for these otherwise deprived segments of Pakistan's population. GTZs contact at grassroots level and encouraging response that it has received has strengthened GTZs resolve and commitment towards this noble cause.

AN ESCAPE FROM DRUDGERY

Nothing you do for children is ever wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks. But what we do for them is never wasted.

Garrion Keillor.



Sharifa's mind is now preoccupied with little dreams and thoughts related to school.

For Sharifa, at the age of six, at every sunrise a new day began; yet another long, exhausting day. The seasons changed all around, but Sharifa's job of molding unbaked bricks in the scorching sun remained unchanged. As if the heat of the burning process in a brick kiln was not enough, working barefoot, she constantly inhaled fine dust, noxious fumes given out by the burning of coal, firewood, waste oils and rubber tires.

For two agonizing years, Sharifa, performed an arduous task that was unpaid and unacknowledged. She worked at a tender age of six in a brick kiln situated in the outskirts of Peshawar. The working conditions were harsh, to say the least. For the bricks she used to fill the cast (kalab) with mud and left it to dry in the sun. These unbaked bricks were then stacked by her sister Hafiza, aged eight. "I never liked my work. My fingers used to ache every day. Every night I would wish it would rain tomorrow, so we would not have any work to do," says Sharifa.

At the age of nine, her father, a 'pukhtun', made her quit her work at the brick kiln. She was made to do so not because of the way her labor was being exploited; her family being too poor and helpless to afford such feelings of self-respect. In fact, culturally she was now expected to observe 'purdah' (seclusion). Her family required her to conserve family traditions and protect the family's honor. Sharifa, still a child, was not considered young enough to play outside the four walls of her mud house. Socially, her brief childhood had come to an end. At this stage in her life, as a symbol of modesty and chastity, society demanded her to put up an appearance that

did not match her age. Most brick kiln workers and their children provide cheap labor in the kilns. However, owing to the custom of 'purdah', women and girls above eight or nine years of age are prohibited from participating in the labor force. When it comes to honor, a 'pukhtun' seldom compromises. A 'pukhtu' proverb goes, 'Life with poverty is acceptable, but life without honor is death'.

In Sharifa's situation, this uncompromising code of honor has proved to be a refuge from work that is not meant for a child's fragile hands. Born to a family where children are supposed to contribute to and not depend upon the household, her parents cannot afford to give all their children a long period of dependent nurturing. What the parents did manage to provide Sharifa and her older sister, was the consent to send them both to a school. The school not only provided free education, a uniform and new books, it is also right next door. Thus, it was not a threat to the girls' observance of 'purdah'. Now, Sharifa had a chance to experience a pleasant side to life. It was a life that did not solely revolve around bricks and smoke. She had a new set of four walls to enter: an all-girls school. She had access to formal education for which her family had to pay no price. It was something worthwhile and productive that she and her family were getting for free.

For a new role, Sharifa not only received her mother's old pair of slippers, now she also had new books and a new school uniform. In fact her uniform was the only dress that was not one of her mother's old worn out ones which had been altered for her.

Sharifa, is still expected to perform several household chores, besides attending school. Life for a girl belonging to a poor family is not easy at any stage, no matter how young she might be. But even apparently minor changes like going to school, being able to write one's name or reading simple words, can bring great hope to a child.

Sharifa, belongs to a family of pukhtu-speaking Afghan refugees who had to abandon their homeland because of persistent war there. They chose the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan because of its physical and social proximity. Settled in a ghetto of brick kiln workers, Sharifa's family live away from the bright lights of the city of Peshawar. All the mud houses clustered amidst brick kilns are inhabited by workers who have no better options. They are marginalized from the outside world, struggling for survival.

Sharifa's is a family that faces a number of social and economic pressures. The father's income is much below subsistence level. They came to Pakistan, with no savings and few skills, to find that the opportunities for wage earning were few. As Sharifa's mother puts it, "With this much income, we can either buy fuel or food. Not both." They are experiencing poverty, but they draw strength from their unity. It is a family that shares sadness and joy together. Here individual welfare gives way to the welfare of the group as a whole. They are a family of ten living in a single-room mud house. The small room, windowless and dark, serves as sleeping quarters as well as a store for the meager family possessions.

While Sharifa now goes to school, her share of bricks is now being molded by the tiny hands of her six years old sister who helps her father in making up for the loss in production. Her sister and two younger brothers are not only shouldering the responsibility with their father but are also missing out on an education that could improve their future. But such long-term planning is not possible in their situation. Day to day survival is their main concern. As Sharifa's father puts it, "The more bricks we prepare, less emptier our stomachs are."

The parents are deeply anxious about being unable to provide for their children. The father regrets having wasted his sons' future in the kilns. He wants them to go to the newly built school in the village. "But what about food, money and day to day survival?", he asks.

For Sharifa, however, things have changed. She had always wanted to go to school and was the first to get herself enrolled. She adores her school uniform because that was the dress worn by the girls she had always envied. A typical day for Sharifa starts at dawn. She fetches a few sticks from the wood pile and starts a fire to prepare tea. She also heats the left over 'rotai'(bread) from the previous night for the family. After sweeping the courtyard, kneading the dough and filling water from the well, she gets ready for the school. Known as 'baji'(elder sister) at school, Sharifa has been given the duties of a 'monitor' by her teacher. "She is one of my best students. She is not only good at studies, but is also very helpful," confirms her teacher.



Sharifa still sweeps the floors, looks after her siblings, cooks food and fills water in the pots. Everything is the same, except for the fact that she can read and write unlike her mother.

Sharifa's mind is now preoccupied with little dreams and thoughts related to school. For Sharifa, school is not only a place to learn new things, but is also a source of recreation and fun. Recreation is something for which all the workers'

children at the brick kilns are starved. At school, during the lunch break, Sharifa enjoys playing 'kho' (tag) with her schoolmates. That is the time when she can laugh as much as she likes. She can also play innocent jokes on her friends without the fear of being reprimanded for 'indecorous' behavior. In fact, these are the only rare moments when she acts naturally, like a ten year old girl. It is a period of liminality that soon withers with the ringing of the school bell.

Just like Sharifa, for many other girls attending the school, life outside is as unkind and harsh as before. Poverty still lingers on and the economic problems persist. If something has changed, that is the attitude towards life and the future in general. It is a belief that things can change a little, if not completely.

While Sharifa is away at school attending the morning session of the 'Basic Education Program', her older sister does the household chores and looks after younger siblings. However, when Sharifa returns home, it is she who prepares food and takes it for her family at the brick kiln. This is when the older sister leaves for the 'Basic Skills Program' that starts in the afternoons.

In the evenings, whenever he has the energy, Sharifa's father helps her with studies. Presently a laborer at the brick kiln, he used to be a school teacher in Afghanistan. He feels that in such appalling social and economic conditions, even if two of his eight children receive basic education, he would consider himself fortunate.

Sharifa, manages to steal some time late at night to go through her school books. She tries to concentrate on the text in the light of a weak light-bulb. It is only when the mother yells to remind her of the electricity bill that she puts the book under her pillow and goes to sleep. As her mother puts it, "She is aware of nothing else but her school."

Sharifa still sweeps the floors, looks after her siblings, cooks food and fills water in the pots. Everything is just the same, except for the fact that she has started to read and write unlike her mother. Inspite of the poverty all around her she now believes that there could be a better future worth working for. Becoming a teacher does not seem like an impossible dream anymore. "My teacher says, if I keep working hard, I might one day become a teacher myself." Then with a twinkle in her eyes she wonders, "What if it is at my own school?"

The Brick Kilns of NWFP and GTZ

Since, 1993, GTZ has been participating in Pakistan's efforts for development in brick kilns. Most of the brick kilns in the Northwest Frontier Province have created a major environmental problem. The smoke emitted from the brick kilns contains high concentrations of sulfur dioxide and is also a major cause of serious respiratory problems amongst the brick kiln workers. The combustion of rubber and used furnace oil causes hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide to be emitted in large quantities. In such appalling working and environmental conditions in which the brick kiln workers and their children work, GTZ has initiated meaningful collaboration in promotion and dissemination of environment friendly and fuel saving technology called VSBK (Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln Technology) and has also made considerable efforts in improving the BTK (Bull Trench Technology). In the process of this limited but important intervention, GTZ has also spared no effort in providing assistance to improve working and living conditions of brick kiln workers and their families. A special endeavor has consistently been made to help alleviate the problems of the workers and their children, in particular, who have been victims of child labor.

In order to tackle this issue it was identified that only through providing refuge in education could the future of brick kiln workers be improved. It was also recognized that by providing basic vocational skills to the workers and their families new prospects could be introduced that might help them to escape from a life of constant drudgery.

Identification of the Target Group

After a candid and in-depth study of the enormous human sufferings and deprivation of the brick kiln workers, GTZ identified the children of the workers as a group which needed concentrated and sustainable attention for their betterment. These workers live on the premises of the kilns alongwith their families. Entire families work on the kilns. They are paid bare minimum wages and mostly remain under debt of the kiln owners. The worker community is poverty stricken, steeped in ignorance and is subjected to gross violations of their human rights. With child labor rampant, small children are made to perform arduous tasks. They have no access to government schools. Abject poverty and lack of education are two main factors that have been identified as prime reasons of child labor in this community.

GTZ recognized the need to focus on this target group of the grossly under-privileged and associated itself by not only launching the VSBK technology but also developed a comprehensive package which provides a possibility of improving the existing kiln technology (BTK--- BULLS TRENCH KILNS). In its quest to assist Pakistan in tackling the predicament faced by brick kiln workers, GTZ has made a special effort to help ameliorate the lot of children of the brick kiln community. The purpose is to provide them an exploitation free atmosphere where child labor is abolished and emphasis is laid on their health and education. The main thrust of GTZ's efforts is to develop sustainable alternatives for these children.

Breaking the cycle of poverty

"Lifting two hundred bricks tires me, whereas I have to stack two thousand bricks every day. I enjoy school because I enjoy being there and it does not wear me down."

(Khushhaal, age nine)



For Khushaal, who now regularly attends a formal school, life seems to have a direction.

Khushhaal Khan, a Pukhtun boy from Afghanistan, lives in the outskirts of Peshawar. His brief but cataclysmic childhood is being spent amidst the cramped mud houses and the black smoke being belched out of the brick kilns nearby. The word 'Khushhaal, that literally means 'happy' or "well-off", can hardly be used to describe the actual living conditions or the state of mind of this nine year old boy. For Khushhaal, it is a herculean task to show signs of bliss on his face in a situation where his father often complains of chest pain while his vision is also failing. Khushhaal just continues to work on the brick kiln.

His mother stays at home, doing the housework and looking after her four children. Her daily chores include washing clothes, preparing food, sweeping the floor, and shaping and slapping 'sapayakay' (dung cakes) onto the walls of her house to dry.

These are later used for burning in the stove. Meanwhile, her anemic two years-old not only plays in the mud, but once in a while puts some of it in his mouth. All the mother can do is yell at him. Getting rid of dust or mud is an unworkable task in their situation. In case of an illness, she concocts a home remedy to avoid spending money on medicines. Bringing up children in hard living and environmental conditions, she finds it impossible to afford prevention, let alone the cures. "The doctor tells me to get my son dewormed. What he does not tell me is how to buy the expensive medicine," says the mother.

Khushaal's sisters Asiya and Gul, seven and eight respectively, help their father from dawn to dusk, without complaining about the premature death of their childhood. They have no complaints about him because they know that he cares for

them and is not oblivious of their circumstances. They only have their fate to blame for trapping them in a situation from where there is no way out. The only desire that they express is that of going to a school like many other girls in the locality. While other girls of their age are getting better at needlework at school, the hands of these two are becoming more and more worn-out and callous with the painstaking work at the brick kiln. Some of the other girls have already started preparing some things for their 'jahayz' (dowry) with the skills they have recently learnt through the 'basic skills program'. For Asiya and Gul it seems more like a dream that is not meant to come true. Their mother says, "By the time they return from work, they are so exhausted that if you were to push them they would fall flat on the ground. They can hardly drag themselves to bed, let alone attend school,".

The daughters have a day off on Fridays. That is the day when they help their mother with the household chores. For the father, however, there is no break in the monotonous job that seems inseparable from his fate. Paid on the basis of the number of bricks that he makes, for him taking a break would mean going without some basic necessities of everyday life.

On the other hand Khushhaal's typical day starts at dawn when his youngest sister's cries for milk wake him up from deep slumber. The little mud room shared by the whole family is not exactly the best place to relax after an exhausting day. After getting up, Khushhaal makes use of the only free time he can get and revises his school work. Later he fetches water for household use from a communally shared tap outside. After washing his face he finishes his cup of tea with a piece of bread, picks his school bag and heads for school. At school, life for him does not seem as burdensome as it is for the less fortunate ones. He is the best student in his school. Among other joys he can look forward to, he is proud of being asked to read lessons out aloud which are repeated by the rest of the boys after him.

After school, he takes food for his sisters and father to the brick kiln. Till sunset he works with them, stacking bricks. It is a task that he strongly dislikes but cannot escape from in the near future. Khushhaal's world revolves around his school and work at the brick kiln. When he is not working he is studying, when not studying he is working. He says, "Schoolwork is easier than brickwork." There is no rest or play in between. He loves his slingshot, but seldom finds time to use it. He is fond of playing cricket but hardly ever plays it as it takes a lot of time. Khushhaal has never been out of Bahadar Kalay, the village where the brick kiln is located. All he has seen is each and every brick kiln in the locality. He has never been to a park or a cinema. Recreation costs money and is at the bottom of his family's list of priorities.

The story of Khushhaal's family is not a happy one. His father was a peasant in neighboring Afghanistan. He lost his home and property during the Soviet occupation of the country. His father affirms, "We had to abandon our home as life had become too insecure. I left my ancestral land on which our subsistence depended. Worst of all, we left the graves of all our loved ones amidst the deafening shelling." In search of peace and security they sought refuge in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. Since last fifteen years, Khushaal's family has chosen Bahadar Kalay, lying in the periphery of the city of Peshawar, as their abode. The

family lives crammed in a crude shelter fashioned from straw and mud. Even though they are thankful that they now live in a place where they are free from a constant fear of being killed by a stray bullet or an artillery rocket, the feeling of insecurity persists.

Here there is a day to day struggle for the basic necessities of life. Escaping from the hands of war and death they have ended up in the clutches of perpetual poverty. Arriving with no skills to find something better, a laborious and monotonous job awaited the family. The single room house they live in has been provided by a brick kiln owner. Khushhaal's father has spent a major portion of his life making bricks for other peoples' houses, while his own home is built of mud and straw. Open drains run down the middle of narrow lanes between these cramped houses. The stench and noise clearly announce that this is a place only to be inhabited by the very poor.

***"At the end of the day, my fingers are sore and my back aches. If I quit school, I will end up doing this job for the rest of my life"*, says Khushaal**



Although four members of the family work, the income is so small that they can barely afford to feed themselves. Like many other families working at the brick kilns, Khushhaal's family lives without what most people might consider as the basic necessities of life. They must struggle to survive with inadequate food, shelter and healthcare. They earn just enough to get by but not enough to improve their lot.

Khushaal's family is bonded to a way of life that has trapped them into a cycle of poverty, which offers no hope for progress. They are paid a very little amount as most of their wages is taken away from them to pay back the loans which they take from their employer as advance payment for their work. Khushhaal's father, in order to get his eldest daughter married, had to ask for advance payment. The daughter has been married off but the father's bondage to the brick kilns has become eternal. He has three more daughters to marry off. That would mean more loans and stronger shackles.

The owners of the brick kilns who lend them money pay them low wages and charge high interest. They are forced to continue working because they can never

save enough money to pay back the original loan. There is hardly any accurate and reliable bookkeeping and Khushaal's father could easily spend the rest of his life trying to pay off debt. No matter how much the parents want, they are unable to free all their children of the toil that is not only part of their present, but could well be their future.

Khushhaal started school last year, when a new school was built in Bahadar Kalay. He does not work full time at the brick kiln with his father anymore. Amongst the eight siblings, Khushhaal and his brother are the only fortunate ones to attend a formal school. None of the brick kiln workers can afford to send all their children for formal education, as education for them is more of a luxury than a necessity. For families surviving on the lowest rung of the ladder of life, the children's contribution in to household's income is too vital to be foregone. Khushaal's father confirms, "We make about two thousand bricks a day. For thousand bricks we get eighty-five rupees. Without the help of my children I cannot make more than six hundred bricks a day. That is a loss of more than half of our income. Thus, if they do not work with me we would all go to bed with empty stomachs."

Khushhaal's father is aware of the fact that the only way to rid his children of perpetual poverty is for them to seek refuge in education. For Khushaal, who now regularly attends a formal school, life seems to have a direction. His father constantly reminds him that his failure at school would mean ending up in a brick kiln for the rest of his life. The father says, "I would not mind dying of hunger, if that is the price I have to pay for Khushhaal to continue his education."

Now that Khushaal is doing well in his studies, his father sees a ray of hope. Although the boy still contributes to the family income by working after school, his future does not seem like a dead end street. The lad insists that he would want to become a 'munshee' (the 'accountant' at the brick kiln). Not having any experience of the outside world, for him a 'munshee' epitomizes power, wealth and authority. When Khushhaal sees the 'munshee' relaxing on a 'chaarpoy' (a bed) with an electric fan beside him, counting money and passing orders in an authoritative manner, it arouses envy in him. The boy starts imagining himself as a 'munshee'. "I would like to do a job that is not controlled by anyone but is rather in my control," says Khushaal.

Khushhaal is still unaware of the fact that with education he could not only become a 'munshee' but could also improve the lot of the whole family. But what he does know is that he does not want to end up in the abyss from which his father is unable to drag himself out. "My hope is that he will acquire education and with that, he might help to change the lives of the rest of us," says the father. Khushaal who wants to substitute his thumbprint with a signature and to acquire the 'munshee's' skill with numbers, might one day be successful in breaking free of the circle of poverty in which the family is trapped.



Epilogue

Just as despair can come to one only from other human beings, hope too, can be given to one only by other human beings.

Elie Wiesel

The present of all the brick kiln workers is not as dreary as before. The children clutching school bags in their hands, wearing neat uniforms, do not give a picture of misery and poverty. Women with infants in their arms, covering themselves from head to toe in white 'chaadors' (veils) rush towards the afternoon session to gain knowledge of what they had been deprived. For them the four walls of the school epitomize not only change but also confidence in themselves and their future. The men at the carpentry class look up with great pride to the wooden stools they have prepared with their newly acquired skill. The very sight of it gives them joy, as now they know that their worn out and callous hands were not meant to mold bricks alone.

Inspite of the positive change in the lives of the brick kiln workers, there seems to be a feeling of uncertainty lingering on regarding their future. They have enough motivation to keep on struggling for a better tomorrow but not the means to keep the schools going. They lack the resources that would help them in continuing the journey towards betterment. Now that their hopes have been raised by an effective schooling program they are still uncertain regarding their future.

Khushaal and Sharifa like most of their community members do not want to lose faith in the future. They look up to you and me, or anyone who is able to assure them that they will not end up as child laborers once again because of the lack of resources to keep the program going. They do not want their past to be repeated; neither for themselves, nor for their brothers and sisters.

Basic Education and Skill Learning Program

Introduction.

To achieve the ambitious goal of providing the children of brick kiln worker community an exploitation free atmosphere, in 1995 GTZ launched its Basic Education and Skill Learning Program. In the past the program that was called "Basic Education and Skill Learning for Children of Brick Kiln Workers Families" has broadened its horizons and now focuses not just on the children of the brick kiln workers but the whole family as its target group. The program was implemented in Peshawar and Mardan regions of the Northwest Frontier Province of the country. The prime motive of this program has been to participate at the grassroots level and lend assistance to Pakistan in its endeavor to alleviate poverty, ignorance and deprivation which have assumed endemic proportions. Inadequate educational facilities, non availability of schools, lack of properly qualified teachers and distant locations of schools were identified as some of the reasons for predicament of this group.

It was soon realized by GTZ that the brick kiln worker community is unlikely to get instant attention from the government, owing to lack of resources and overwhelming demands from a wide spectrum of the economy which needed official patronage. Hence, GTZ moved in fast and established direct contact with the brick kiln worker community. The areas chosen for immediate intervention by starting educational schools were Peshawar, Mardan and Jalala in the NWFP.

The main aim of the program was to reduce child labor in the brick kilns. In order to motivate the brick kiln workers to enroll their children in the education program, several incentives were offered, such as providing them with educational material free of cost. The response of the community was very encouraging. The project was accepted with unusual enthusiasm from parents and children alike.

Thus, since December 1995 GTZ is successfully implementing a schooling program in the brick kiln areas of Peshawar, Mardan and Jalala. This schooling program has a 'Morning Component' (Basic Education) and an 'Afternoon Component' (Skill Learning Program). On behalf of GTZ, both the programs are implemented by PECWS (Paradise Environmental and Community Welfare Society, Mardan / Peshawar) and SES (Skills for Employment and Self-Employment, Peshawar).

Why Basic Education for the Brick Kiln Workers?

After extensive surveys amongst the brick kiln communities in Peshawar and Mardan regions, GTZ assessed the needs and demands of the community members in order to improve their living conditions. It was recognized that through the improvement of the living conditions of the brick kiln communities, their children could be given a chance to move towards a future that was free of extreme hardship which they experience through child labor.

In the brick kiln areas, where, in the past the dropout rates in schools was high, motivation to study was lacking, especially because the families needed the children's labor or earning power. It was also believed that the education available was so poor that it could confer no advantage. Thus, it was vital to invest in basic education in order to effect changes in social and economic lives of the brick kiln workers. To achieve the above goals a comprehensive plan of basic education was chalked out. In order to motivate and encourage the brick kiln community, the educational package made an effort to eliminate the impediments that came in the way of reaping fruitful results, such as,

* inaccessibility of schools.

* lack of motivation regarding female education

* lack of incentives.

* lack of qualified teachers.

It was recognized by GTZ that in order to withdraw children from the brick kilns, education had to be cited as the panacea. In achieving this goal GTZ was assisted by a local NGO, called Paradise Environmental and Community Welfare Society (PECWS), Peshawar. Since the establishment of its first school in Mardan\Jalala area in December 1995, the program is successfully being implemented according to the plan of activity. The students have already appeared for their exams in Mardan \ Jalala. The success of the morning session of basic education encouraged the establishment of an afternoon session of basic education and skill learning for women.

Location of the Schools

School	Classification	Venue
1	Boys	Kiln of Malik Rahim Gul,Malakand Road, Jalala.
2	Coeducation	Kiln of Ahmad Jan Malakand Road,Jalala.
3	Coeducation	Kiln of Tariq Khan, Paru Pump, Jalala.
4	Coeducation	Kiln of Haji Rahan-u-din, Faqir Banar Baghdad, Mardan.
5	Coeducation	Kiln of Shahid Khan, Katlong Road Baghdad, Mardan.
6	Girls	Kiln of Haji Jalat Khan, Swabi Road Par Hoti, Mardan.
7	Girls	Kiln of Bashir Khan, Ring Road, Peshawar.
8	Boys	Kiln of Ishaq Khan, Bahadar Kalay, Peshawar.
9	Coeducation	Kiln of Saleem Khan, Bahadar Kalay, Peshawar.
10	Coeducation	Kiln of Muslim Khan, Scheme Chowk, Peshawar.
11	Coeducation	Kiln of Zahir Shah, Inqilab Road Sarozai Peshawar.
12	Coeducation	Kiln of Khalil Khan, Inqilab Road, Sarozai Peshawar.
13	Coeducation	Kiln of Aeen Khan, Inqilan Road, Sarozai Peshawar.
14	Boys	Kiln of Javed Khan, Inqilab Road, Sarozai Peshawar.
15	Boys	Kiln of Haji Niaz Muhammad Khan, Inqilab Road, Sarozai Peshawar.
16	Boys	Kiln of Zaman, Mera, Peshawar.
17	Coeducation	Kiln of Haji Yousaf Khan, Cherat Road, Nowshera.
18	Boys	Kiln of Alamgir Khan, Palosai Road Palosai, Peshawar.

Main Objectives of the Schooling Program

 To create a positive attitude in regard to the importance of education amongst the brick kiln community.

 To enable the children to explore other options for the future.

 To provide children with basic education, such as reading and writing skills as well as mathematical skills in order to be able to do simple arithmetic. This was recognized as vital because as most brick kiln workers are illiterate they are vulnerable to exploitation by the brick kiln owners in regard to matters of accounts.

 To make an effort to gradually eliminate child labor that prevents the children from acquiring vocational and intellectual skills that could improve their future.

 To provide women of brick kiln communities with basic skills like tailoring and embroidery that would in return open new avenues in their otherwise limited economic options.

Schools and Their Infrastructure

The first school was started in February 1996. The students proved extremely motivated and showed great desire to attend school. Owing to excess of demand over capacity of the schools, the question of providing incentives for attracting children towards education did not arise.The enthusiasm with which these children took to learning, and also their responsiveness towards attending school encouraged the organization to investigate options of extending their involvement with children at the brick kilns

Furthermore, brick kiln owners in a rare element of cooperation in achieving this noble goal of betterment of lives of their workers' children, provided land for establishing these schools free of cost. They have also taken the burden of providing adequate security of the premises.

In the past, besides other hurdles, schools situated away from the center proved an impediment, particularly for girls who are expected to observe strict 'purdah'. Recognizing this problem it was felt that constructing schools near the houses would not only prove more beneficial but would also guarantee the programs success. This helped in an enthusiastic participation of girls in not only the morning session of 'Basic Education', but also the afternoon session for girls and women.

School buildings

In December 1995, modest school buildings i.e. one classroom schools to accommodate 25-30 students, were constructed in Mardan\ Jalala area. Thereafter six of the 18 schools were established in this region from January-March 1996. The school building, a basic single-room structure (23 x 14 ft) is a brick construction. It is furnished with basic classroom furniture such as teacher's table, chair, blackboard, sign board, water cooler, glasses, chalks, fans and mat, etc. This minimum construction of schools cost approximately Rs 54,000 (DM 2160). All schools are

equipped with toilets (latrines) and are connected to electric power. Since the schools are open throughout the summer season, two fans are also provided to each school. The schools operate throughout the year, without any break.

Girls Schools

In Pakistan, where daughters are protected by their families to the extent that they even do not speak to people not belonging to their families, their education is not always kept as a priority. In the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan where the female literacy rate is 14%, girls are mostly kept at home because of the strict code of 'purdah'. As far as the girls schools are concerned they are not only close to all the village houses, but their easy accessibility also does not pose a threat to the observance of 'purdah'.

The apprehensions of all the brick kiln workers' families have been eliminated from the very onset by the first female school. The schools have not only been keenly attended by the girl students but are also showing positive results. The attendance of girls in large numbers in the morning session encouraged the starting of the afternoon session for girls and women aged between 12 and 30 years



Inspite of 'purdah', which is an elaborate system of rules and prohibitions confining women to the house, the brick kiln community has given a spirited response to female education.

Coeducational Schools

In March, 1996 a coeducational schools program was launched. The expected target was soon surpassed and today around 800 students aged between 5 to 13 years are attending school six days in a week. Amongst these students the girl students are aged between 5 to 9 years, whereas the boys are between 5 to 12 years of age. Ten teachers teach in the morning session, which starts from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Whereas, 8 teachers work during the afternoon session. Amongst these teachers 6 are women and 2 men. The subjects taught are Urdu, Pushtu, Mathematics and English. About 65% students are of Afghan origin. 586 students have already successfully completed the first year (1996) course. The curriculum followed by these schools is the same as that taught at normal government primary level covering Urdu, Pushtu, and English languages. It has been forecast that some 800 students aged between 6 and 13 years, would take the final examination of the second year of schooling and qualify for joining the third year of Primary Education. The first year's examination took place in Mardan\Jalala at the end of October, 1996.

Afternoon Session

" The female trainees are hoping and praying that the educational program would last, as they see it as a platform from where they can train themselves for an income generating project", (Incharge of the female afternoon session).



"From an old piece of cloth, I stitched a frock for my little sister. My mother did not have to buy one from the shop", **says a 14 years old girl at a tailoring course. Taking tailoring course, enables girls to save household expenses by sewing their own clothes and those of their siblings.**

Basic components of the afternoon session for women are,

- ✯ basic education
- ✯ learning handicrafts
- ✯ tailoring

There are six centers that provide basic educational and skill learning activities to women. Four of these are situated in Peshawar, whereas two are in Mardan. The age bracket of the trainees ranges between fourteen to forty years. Four days a week the women have basic education classes in which half an hour is provided to skill learning, Similarly, two days are given to skill learning in which basic education is given an hour each day.

The afternoon session which had initially begun with basic education as its main component, has widened its horizons according to the needs and demands of its target group. Women from the brick kiln communities had expressed the desire for learning tailoring because of its utility. Thus, in one of the centers, located in Peshawar, a tailoring course was started. For this purpose a qualified instructor for this particular job was hired. Although all the centers have their own teachers, for the tailoring course a special instructor pays regular visits to assist the trainees. Material needed for this course, such as needles, thread, cloth etc. are provided free of charge to all the trainees. In order to assess the progress of all these centers a female supervisor makes regular visits to the afternoon sessions.

The very introduction of the schooling program was responded to with great enthusiasm by women from the brick kiln communities. For the syllabus the NGO relies more on the needs of the community and thus the program is more business oriented. After learning these skills the women want to sell their handicrafts to bring in extra income. The program helps women in learning skills that would help them in exploring avenues of income generation. Another attractive option for women is that

they are able to save expenses by producing items at home which would otherwise be bought from the market. Thus, this particular component helps in alleviating the economic burden on these women. It is an initiative whereby women are encouraged to participate economically but in line with what is perceived to be their primary socio-cultural roles and obligations.

Zubaida, a widow and mother of two sons says, " My sons work at the brick kilns in order to earn money. Their meager income hardly helps in day to day survival. I am learning stitching and embroidery so that I am not only able to contribute to the family income but also reduce the burden on my sons".

Measures Taken for Improving the Basic Education Program



Incentives were provided, such as 800 students received free educational material.



Qualified teachers were identified and selected.



Teacher training workshop was organized.



The schools were visited on weekly basis by qualified supervisors for further help and assistance.

Since its very start, the basic education and skill learning (female) program has been successful in creating a positive attitude in regard to the importance of education amongst the brick kiln community. The brick kiln workers children, who would normally work full time at the brick kilns are now studying and only assisting their parents after school. Children have learned the material taught to them with ease. The project has enabled them to explore other options for future, instead of living the rest of their lives molding bricks for the sake of food and bare survival.

Why Basic Vocational Training Program for the Brick Kiln Community?

The very existence of child labor is a bitter reality that will persist as long as poverty and illiteracy remain. Curbing child labor is fruitless unless its root cause, poverty, is eliminated. No parents, no matter how poor they might be, want their children to suffer or waste their precious childhood. It is mere poverty and deprivation that forces the brick kiln workers to depend on their children's economic contribution. Thus, in order to give the brick kiln workers children a better tomorrow, GTZ's program of Basic Education not only provides a ray of hope but also saves the childhood of the brick kiln workers children from an unnatural strain.

In order to improve the living conditions of the brick kiln workers, another successful component of the Schooling Program started which was based on providing vocational training to the brick kiln workers and their families. For this purpose GTZ has embarked upon a program of opening vocational training schools.

For this purpose two marketable skills i.e. Tailoring and Carpentry were selected. Training in the selected skills is imparted from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and the institute is run six days a week. It is hoped that the transfer of skills would prepare the trainees for a 'job entry' level. SES (Skill for Employment and Self - Employment), a well-known non-governmental organization assisted GTZ in implementing this component of the schooling project. The purpose of this component of the schooling program is to provide the brick kiln workers and their families autonomy as all of them lack the training, skill, and education to enter occupations that would improve their living conditions.

Location of the skill development centers

Tailoring centers.

1. Bhatta Aeen Khan (Peshawar).
2. Bhatta Saleem Khan (Peshawar).
3. Bhatta Jawaid Khan (Peshawar).
4. Bhatta Faqir Band (Mardan\Jalala).

Carpentry center

5. Bhatta Khalil Khan (Peshawar).

The vocational training program chalked out for the brick kiln workers families is being implemented according to the plan. It is divided into two sessions, each having seventy-five trainees attending the course. After the selection of prospective trainees, workshops were equipped with the requisite furniture, tools, training aids and consumable materials. The main focus is on the tailoring and carpentry courses, because of their great demand amongst the brick kiln community. A panel of suitable trainers in the two trades were engaged. On conclusion of the course each successful trainee is given a set of tools which are adequate for the individual to start his personal income generating program. The tailoring trainees receive a sewing machine.

In the month of July 1997, 75 graduates from the brick kiln community qualified and were capable of running their own carpentry or tailoring shop. They were also now qualified to get employment as semi-skilled craftsmen.

The curriculum for the vocational training course for the brick kilns was set by SES. It is a standardized curriculum used in the workshops of SES. Thus the same standards are expected to be achieved by the trainees from the brick kiln communities. Although training provided to the brick kiln community is according to the 'basic training component', the trainees can also avail the benefits of applying for a loan scheme or going through the apprenticeship scheme. The SES loan scheme coordinator also helps the trainees in finding jobs upon the successful completion of the course. They are provided with the opportunity of working in shops as apprentices, which not only helps them in gaining practical work experience but also knowledge of running a business independently. Here, they not only learn about the demands of the clients but also work under professional supervision.

Freedom to learn and earn







A Report on the GTZ Project, Peshawar



reedom to learn and earn

The Basic Education and Skill Learning Program for the Brick Kiln Workers Community, NWFP.



A Report on the GTZ Project, Peshawar

Foreword

The brick kiln workers community is a ghetto of families, all sharing the same fate; a fate that is uncertain. Struggling and striving together, they have been brought here by poverty and the search for bread.

In a world of rapid change, there is a strong need to change the living conditions of the brick kiln workers community. It is of course, extremely desirable that children from the brick kiln communities not be forced into positions where work replaces education, but economic realities sometimes leave no alternatives.

This publication commemorates a year of hope in the lives of these individuals and also the rise of awareness about the plight of these families. For the brick kiln workers and their families, it has been a period of supporting initiatives and ventures that contributed to achieving the objectives of providing the members of the community a chance to explore new options in life.

The wish of brick kiln workers to create a stable environment for themselves runs strong and deep. Their hopes have been raised at the very onset of GTZ's (Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Teschnische Zusammenarbeit, German Agency for Technical Cooperation) schooling program. Not only the parents, but the children also wish that this ray of hope does not weaken. It would be unfair to discontinue a journey that is leading towards a hope of prosperity.

I would never want my son to discontinue his education. I would do anything to protect his future, even if I have to die for it" says little Khushaal's father, a brick kiln worker. He is too weak and helpless to fight alone. What he possesses is the desire but not the means to help his son cling on to a present that might change an uncertain future.

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